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ABSTRACT

The high incidence of divorce and remarriage means that the structure of American families is changing. Drawing on 13 studies that explore intergenerational obligations, this book discusses the responsibilities of family members to one another after divorce and remarriage. Chapter 1, "Who Is Responsible for Dependent Family Members?," presents an overview of the book, including the book's purpose and organization, definitions of family responsibility and family obligations, definitions of kinship, and historical perspectives on family responsibility. Chapter 2, "Parental Financial Support of Children Following Divorce," discusses child support and custody arrangements, including beliefs about parents' and stepparents' financial obligations to children, attitudes toward child support, and fathers' child support obligations. Chapter 3, "Mom's House? Dad's House? Parents' Responsibility To Assume Physical Custody of Children," discusses physical custody issues, including legal custody status and attitudes about physical custody shifts and whether physical custody is a gendered phenomenon. Chapter 4, "Older Family Members' Financial Obligations to Younger Generations," explores grandparents' and stepgrandparents' roles and responsibilities and their attitudes toward inheritance following divorce and remarriage. Chapter 5, "Adults' Obligations to Parents, In-Laws, and Stepparents: A Review of the Literature," explores the literature on filial obligations, perceived responsibilities to in-laws, and obligations to stepparents. Chapter 6, "(Step)Filial Obligations," explores attitudes about filial responsibilities to help older divorced parents and stepparents. Chapter 7, "Responsibilities to Elders after the Divorce of the Middle Generation," presents the results of three studies on the effects of marital transitions on perceived obligations to elders. Chapter 8, "Building Models of Intergenerational Obligations," synthesizes the results of the studies discussed in the book, offers propositions about perceived responsibilities in families, and suggests an agenda for researchers. The book's two appendices detail vignettes and methods used in the family obligations studies. Contains 288 references. (LPP)

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